

CASE STUDY

The Largest Network of Fitness Centers in Latin America Uses Fortinet Security Fabric to Accelerate Innovation

Smart Fit is the largest Latin American network of fitness centers, with over 1,000 branches and over 3 million customers in 13 different countries. Founded in 2009 in São Paulo, the network in Brazil alone currently has more than 500 locations spread across 24 states and the Federal District. The company's mission is to democratize access to high-level physical activity with affordable plans and a simple user experience. In other words, Smart Fit seeks to offer more comfortable services with less bureaucracy, ranging from online services to self-service in gyms.

Customers can visit any location in Brazil with their membership. They can make appointments online and even take virtual classes, a service that has become extremely popular during the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, more than 500,000 customers use the company's digital products, and the free in-home training programs have reached 18 million people.

"Although our business is fitness and wellness, we see ourselves as a technology company. The speed at which we are growing is impressive, and this is because we see IT as the business itself and not as an independent area," explains Valter Sobral, Smart Fit's Infrastructure Manager. "Investing in technology is our priority. We focus on cutting-edge products, as our operations model only makes sense with the best solutions in the market."

Need of Standardization, Automation, and Visibility

The greatest challenge for Smart Fit is to guarantee the stability of the communication between existing locations and new ones designed in the expansion plan. If any of the branches are not correctly connected to the systems, the user experience is directly affected. All services are consumed in real time, from the entrance to the gym (where access is controlled by facial recognition or fingerprints) to the music in the classrooms, the ranking of student performance, and even bicycles connected among locations enabling competitions between people from different gyms.

The company focuses on finding the perfect balance between face-to-face and digital activities, where everything is computerized and controlled remotely.

"We have more than 1,000 service delivery points, that is, network connectivity between locations. We required standardization, automation, and visibility, which we lacked due to our outdated technology," says Sobral. "We faced some



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Details

Customer: Smart Fit

Industry: Retail

Location: Brazil

Number of Sites: 410

Solutions

- FortiGate Next Generation Firewall
- Fortinet Secure SD-WAN
- FortiSwitch
- FortiManager
- FortiAnalyzer

problems with simple actions, like updating the firmware of all the firewalls in all the branches. We did not feel confident to do it without having someone supervising the work personally, because we had problems and had to request the urgent presence of an expert to avoid stopping the operations of a branch,” explains Sobral.

Another problem was that Smart Fit has many people working in customer service needing different access levels, which led to mistakes such as granting access that should not be given. This undermined the standardization and security of the office network.

And lastly, the segmentation of all different business units was another big challenge, and that was the only way for the network to take advantage of critical business projects such as connecting Internet of Things (IoT) devices to the network.

Secure SD-WAN Ensures Connection Quality and Customer Experience

Fortinet technology solved all the standardization and segmentation problems for Smart Fit’s branch network. The fitness company started with implementing Fortinet solutions in 2019 through the advice of FXO, Fortinet’s business partner that assisted Smart Fit in selecting technologies, deployment, and support. FortiGate Next-Generation Firewalls were deployed in more than 400 branches, two in the headquarters and one in the AWS cloud, to provide network traffic security and enable the secure Software-defined Wide Area Networking (SD-WAN) service. The company plans to expand the Fortinet Secure SD-WAN solution to cover all of its locations, including those outside of Brazil.

“When we invited other vendors to compete, Fortinet presented itself as a recognized security player that would also provide us with connectivity,” says Sobral. “We knew about Fortinet, and we acknowledged that the company had the most user-friendly interface on the market, which we confirmed during the project’s implementation. The team was able to navigate the solutions without any difficulty.”

Through the robust secure SD-WAN solution, the network of gyms now offers fast and uninterrupted connectivity to all branches. “In remote locations, it is not always easy to get good quality connections, so getting the best route is essential to ensure the customer experience. There are a lot of people moving inside the branches, and a few seconds of delay are enough to generate long lines at the access control points,” he adds. “Before using Fortinet Secure SD-WAN, link performance was often degraded, and by the time we realized that, it was too late. This is just one example of the benefits of the Fortinet solution.”

Information Is Key to Reducing Operating Costs

Smart Fit implemented FortiSwitch Secure Ethernet Switches strategically distributed across branches for Layer 7 segmentation and visibility, allowing IT staff to see all devices and even turn part of the switch extension into a firewall, which is especially useful. FortiSwitches integrate into the access point network, already deployed by the internet service provider, proving the flexibility of the Fortinet solution to integrate and provide an optimal level of protection for third-party devices.

Smart Fit also added other Fortinet solutions to its technology platform. FortiAnalyzer provides the visibility and analysis that enables staff to anticipate connectivity issues and resolve link issues before they occur. “Thanks to Fortinet, which has flexible alarms and settings, the operation has become very simple and saves us a lot of time and money. We were able to reduce the cost of shared and dedicated MPLS links by 50% by adopting Fortinet Secure SD-WAN and FortiAnalyzer visibility.”

- FortiDeploy

Business Impact

- Fast connectivity and better user experience with Fortinet Secure SD-WAN
- 50% reduction in dedicated and shared link costs
- Streamlined implementation of security policies and protection against errors and misconfiguration
- Reduction in operational burden with centralized administration and compliance control
- 90% reduction in time spent by IT staff on operational tasks, such as updating firmware and enforcing rules

With FortiManager, the company ensures network management standardization and delivery of business-critical company policies, rules, and firmware. If someone unauthorizedly changes the configuration of a FortiGate, the FortiManager returns everything to the correct configuration, protecting the network from human error. For mass and rapid activation of the configuration of all fitness equipment, Smart Fit uses FortiDeploy to automate device deployments.

“Now, we can better size the IoT devices connected to the network and monitor equipment with statistical data from all branches. We can be sure if we need more equipment in a room or if the weight training area is too crowded and needs a different design. We can also use the data from the cameras for strategic decision-making. Having clear, transparent, and easily accessible information allows us to take better advantage of our business,” he explains.

Security Enables Innovation in a Hyper-Connected Environment

The Fortinet Security Fabric, a broad, integrated, and automated cybersecurity platform, reduces the time Smart Fit’s IT staff spends on simple operational tasks such as updating firmware and enforcing rules by up to 90%. Today, IT professionals are less burdened and can focus on strategic business issues, such as planning future initiatives. “The Fortinet Security Fabric rendered great benefits. Standardization is essential for the success of our business model, and segmentation in all branches was crucial to improving our projects,” says Sobral.

“For our company, IT is a facilitator of ideas, and in this context, security is paramount to implement all the innovations and services that we offer to customers. We are a company in constant evolution, and today we have the tools we need to give wings to our innovation—all in a secure way, since we treat sensitive data of our customers in a hyper-connected environment”, he concludes.

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